Hands On®

September/October 2007

issue no. 5

The Newsletter of the American Massage Therapy Association

AMTA Members are Just a Click Away

Daniel Morello (CA) is located at Mountain Mobile Massage in Big Bear Lake, California.

At home or away, consumer or therapist, more people than ever are using *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service to find AMTA members, with nearly half a million searches last year. And it's not just clients doing the searching. Member Daniel Morello (CA) knows first-hand.

Morello received a call from a fellow AMTA member who lived 100 miles away. The member explained he had a client who was moving to Morello's area and was concerned about finding the right massage therapist. The client was an active senior who had very positive results with massage and wanted it to continue. After a few phone calls, the member decided Morello would be the perfect choice for his client. He also said if it weren't for the locator service, he would never have found Morello. The client now sees Morello twice a month and loves the work that he does for her.

This isn't the first time Morello has had national exposure from the locator service. Over the four years he's been listed, he's received many referrals and references. Many of these referrals have become regular weekly clients. And like the member who used the locator service to find Morello, when one of his clients needs help finding a massage therapist when traveling out of town, he simply refers them to the locator service. Living in a tourist destination, he also refers his vacationing clients who are interested in finding a massage therapist when they return home to the locator service.

"As a male massage therapist, I feel it's important to have a practice that attracts clients in other ways besides word-of-mouth," says Morello. "It's important to attract a clientele that is diverse from as many places as possible. It's so rewarding working with new clients, and with the national locator service I can look forward to massaging many more!"

Do you have an interesting story about the locator service you'd like to share? We want to hear from you! Please contact Karla Karapetian, kkarapetian@amtamassage.org or toll-free 877-905-2700, ext. 133, to tell your story.

If you're a Professional Active member, make sure you take advantage of *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service, a free member benefit. Just go to www.findamassagetherapist.org to register.

Tips to Help Your Practice Grow

By Jennifer Ryalls (AZ)

From the first moment I walked into my massage school, I felt I was in the right place. Following several years of relieving my mother's drug-resistant migraines with massage, I was ready to embrace the gift that she told me I had. After a history of desk jobs, it felt wonderful to make a visible difference in someone's life. Clients would get up from my table standing up tall and smiling, when only an hour before they had been hunched over and in pain.

But despite my experience in corporate America, I still had a few lessons to learn about starting my own massage business. Starting and growing your own business can be difficult. Many of us didn't have business classes in school, and sometimes it can be hard to find advice from fellow therapists. To help you find your way, here are some lessons I learned during my first year running my own practice:

- **Find a place for yourself.** Even in the rural Arizona town where I live, there is an inordinate number of massage therapists, and it seems everyone is related to one. To set myself apart, I examined the services other therapists were offering and noticed no one was providing chair massage. So I'm building my chair massage reputation, and my goal is to have the corporate, group and event chair massage portion of my business take off to such an extent that I can leave the table massage component behind.
- **Join your local chamber of commerce.** By joining, you will show potential clients that your business is legitimate. Also, you can take advantage of every marketing opportunity it offers. Many chambers will display your business cards and brochures in the lobby, put an announcement in the newsletter when something changes with your practice and list your contact information in the member directory.
- **It's OK to say no.** Instead of compromising yourself, say no when clients ask for a modality you don't want to do or don't feel confident performing. Every therapist has his or her own strengths, and that's why so many can flourish in the same town.
- **Be professional at all times.** When you're in public, someone is always watching. Make sure you are wearing the clothing, using the speech and showing the body language that presents you and your business in a positive light.

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Hands On
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Information contained in *Hands On* does not necessarily reflect the opinions or beliefs of AMTA and/or the staff of *Hands On.* AMTA, founded in 1943, is the oldest and largest nonprofit, national, professional organization serving massage therapists in the United States, Canada and 27 other countries.

Membership in AMTA is open to all qualified individuals regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender, age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or physical handicap.

Mission: To serve AMTA members while advancing the art, science and practice of massage therapy.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Fellow AMTA Ambassadors,

If there were one thing I could wish for AMTA members, it would be to see the day when physicians, massage therapists, allied health professionals, administrators and third-party payers work hand-in-hand for the greater good of the client, organization and society.

This corresponds with AMTA's three- to five-year goal to continually encourage collaboration with industry stakeholders toward developing a common vision for the profession. AMTA has a series of goals, all of which support the long-range goal that AMTA members will be the choice for massage as a routine part of society's health and well-being. You can view these goals at www.amtamassage.org/about/FutureDirections.html.

In late June, AMTA had an opportunity to help bring these goals a little closer to fruition by participating in a stakeholder dialogue organized by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). I had the opportunity to meet with NCCAM Acting Director Ruth Kirschstein, NCCAM staff and stakeholders to explore future directions for research, research training and outreach, and provide perspectives on research related to massage therapy.

NCCAM organized its dialogue around three key questions:

1. What are the greatest opportunities for research in the next few years?
2. What are the greatest challenges to conducting complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) research?
3. Do we see CAM research having an impact on trends in integrative medicine?

I am pleased to report that we gained consensus on many issues. The discussion of the greatest opportunities for future research considered measurable results, for example, examination of the benefits of massage therapy in relation to acute and chronic pain. Determining the benefits, safety and risks of massage applications in clinical arenas could increase confidence in the science and practice of massage therapy

The first step in addressing challenges to CAM research is to create models of research that embrace and evaluate the effects of therapies in practice. We need to achieve greater research literacy by training massage therapists in clinical research protocols, and seeking funding for larger studies to produce more research results.

Finally, we discussed the concept that clinical research on massage therapy could validate its use in integrative care, particularly in the areas of pain relief, pain management and stress relief. Increased research could aid the integration of massage therapy into patient care, and further the growth of evidence-based massage practice. Ultimately these developments could benefit massage therapists and the public by promoting good health and improving the quality of life.

Collaboration among CAM professionals is an essential step to securing and advancing our respective place as a part of society's routine health care. I am proud to be your national ambassador in this effort.

For more information about NCCAM, please visit www.nccam.nih.gov. And please continue to contact me with your comments and constructive feedback at DrLeena@amtamassage.org.

Proud to be an AMTA member,

Leena S. Guptha, DO
AMTA President

mtj Goes Gold

Publication Wins Three SNAP EXCEL Awards

mtj™ (*Massage Therapy Journal*®) was recognized on June 14 with three top awards from the Society of National Association Publications (SNAP). The publication received two gold EXCEL awards in the categories of *General Excellence* and *Most Improved* for an association magazine with a circulation of 50,000 to 100,000.

It also received one of only four EXCEL *Extra!* awards, which was presented to **mtj** for its outstanding innovation in association publishing. *Extra!* award winners are chosen from among the EXCEL winners "for going one step further and taking bold chances to innovate in an ever-changing publishing environment."

"The entire package holds together from cover to cover," the EXCEL judges noted. "The magazine flawlessly rises above its inception to present its material in a clean, calm, well-paced fashion. This magazine raises the bar to incredible heights—not only for this publication and [AMTA], but for the entire industry."

The awards capped off a year-and-a-half of work that went into the redesign of **mtj**, which focused on improving content, as well as overhauling the look of the publication. "We share these awards with our readers," says Valerie Danner, **mtj** managing editor. "Their feedback about what they wanted from a publication was invaluable to the redesign process."

The EXCEL program judges more than 1,000 magazines, newsletters, scholarly journals, electronic publications and websites on editorial quality, design, general excellence and more. More than 150 awards were handed out in Washington, D.C., at SNAP's annual competition, which recognizes exemplary work in association publishing. This year a record number of entries were received.

One of the innovative issues that captured the SNAP EXCEL awards.

Look for the People Wearing Flowers

By the Board Assessment Workgroup

Do you have an idea you'd like to share with the members of the AMTA Board of Directors? Do you have an opinion on the programs, products and services that AMTA provides for members? Perhaps you just want to talk with board members but aren't sure how to identify them. If any of these apply to you, we have a simple solution for you: look for the people wearing a red flower at the upcoming AMTA National Convention in Cincinnati.

AMTA is a member-driven association, and board members not only want to hear from you, they value it. AMTA is your association. Your input, thoughts, views and opinions are what help provide the board with vital information as we set the direction for the association.

The convention is a great opportunity to express your views to board members, so be sure to look for someone with a red flower in his or her lapel in Cincinnati. As part of our commitment to you, board members will be in attendance at all volunteer events. The board members will also be introduced at the convention's opening session, and many board members will attend education sessions during the convention.

If you have any questions, please contact workgroup staff liaison David French at dfrench@amtamassage.org, or toll-free 877-905-2700, ext. 116. For more information on how to communicate with board members, please see "The AMTA Board of Directors Wants to Hear Your Thoughts," *Hands On* May/June 2007, page 3.

Tips to Help Your Practice Grow *Continued from page 1*

- **Practice what you teach.** Take the advice you give your clients. Don't smoke; do exercise regularly, drink lots of water, get chiropractic care and receive massage on a regular basis. Remember, you have to take care of yourself in order to care for others.
- **Be a smart marketer.** Marketing is something you can spend a lot of money on without seeing results. Ask other business owners what forms of advertising have worked for them, and ask marketers if you can trade services. Wear a "massage therapist" T-shirt while running errands. Go to chamber of commerce meetings to network and exchange cards with other business owners. Build your own website through a free host. Go online to design inexpensive business cards, brochures, magnets and other promotional materials. And, being listed in the phone book is a must!
- **Ask.** This goes for anything in your business, whether it's asking to trade services or asking for an article to get published in the local newspaper. People don't have ESP, so they won't be beating down your door to give you what you want. You have to ask for it. Don't be shy. The worst that can happen is someone says no.
- **Volunteer.** Volunteering can be a great way to give back to the community and sometimes can lead to paid work. Some organizations also print their volunteers' names in the newspaper to show their appreciation, which is free advertising for you!

Jennifer Ryalls, LMT, is a graduate of the Arizona School of Massage Therapy and has been an AMTA member since 2006.

AMTA Board Sets Direction for FY08/09

In its July conference call, the AMTA Board of Directors approved the strategies and priorities for FY08/09 proposed by the Planning Committee. The approved strategies and priorities are based on analysis of the current environment in the profession and in AMTA. Because efforts to support members and earn their loyal membership are AMTA's highest priority, they continue to be reflected in the planning for FY08/09.

During its call the board took action on several other items, including:

If you'd like to know more about AMTA's planning, the FY07/08 Strategic Plan and other core documents can be read online at www.amtamassage.org/about/FutureDirections.html.

- **What?** Charged the Governance Committee to form a workgroup, which would include Planning Committee members and others as needed, to research the duties, workloads and responsibilities of national volunteers. The workgroup will bring recommendations to the board no later than March 2009.

  Why? AMTA is committed to having the best possible national volunteer leadership and making sure the volunteer experience is a good one. The Volunteer Compensation Workgroup hired an independent consultant to help evaluate the current volunteer workforce. The consultant indicated concerns about the current workload of national volunteers.

- **What?** Approved the following allocations as guidelines for the FY08/09 budget:
  - 1.35 percent for work in support of the strategic plan;
  - 1.15 percent to emerging requests and opportunities;
  - 97.5 percent for work in support of ongoing activities.

  Why? Once the board has determined AMTA's direction for the next fiscal year, it must make sure the association has the resources, people, systems and structures needed to achieve its goals.

  These budget guidelines support the board's commitment to the strategic plan and achieving AMTA's future directions; recognizes that money will be required during the year for items that were unknown when the budget was approved; and ensures that AMTA's ongoing activities continue.

- **What?** Approved revised performance measures for FY07/08 to make them realistic in the current market. Staff was directed to adjust department measures and objectives to reflect the revised performance measures.

  Why? The board originally approved FY07/08 performance measures in January 2007. The board monitors progress on AMTA goals and performance measures and reviews them after the June meeting to make sure they're still applicable in the current massage therapy environment.

- **What?** Agreed to explore the creation of a seat on the AMTA board for the Council of Schools (COS) president. The board also approved an ongoing charge for the COS to develop an annual plan that will enhance their support of AMTA's Strategic Plan.

  The board also charged the Governance Committee to explore the creation of this seat and report back to the board by October 2009.

  Why? The AMTA board recognizes the distinctive and valuable role of the COS within AMTA. In addition, the AMTA board and the COS board recognize the importance of COS alignment with AMTA's Strategic Plan.

- **What?** Approved a face-to-face meeting of the Finance Committee with staff for this budget year. The board will evaluate it by January 2008 to decide if this should become part of the annual budgetary process.

  Why? AMTA wants to ensure that the budget process effectively and efficiently uses volunteer and staff time. AMTA's budget process begins in September and the recommended budget for the coming year is presented to the board in January.

  This requires numerous e-mails between the Finance Committee members and staff, as well as at least seven conference calls. Both the Finance Committee and staff believe a face-to-face meeting at the National Office would simplify and improve the budgeting process.

Federal Bill May Reinstate Incident-to Massage

AMTA is closely following a federal bill titled HR 1846. If this bill is passed it would allow physicians to once again use massage therapists as treatment providers under Medicare and Medicaid "incident-to" services. Incident-to services are defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as those services that are provided incident to physician professional services in the physician's office (whether located in a separate office suite or within an institution) or in a patient's home.

Massage therapists used to be able to provide these therapeutic services. However, in late 2004 CMS defined who can provide incident-to outpatient therapeutic services as only physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists, cutting massage therapists out of the reimbursable group.

HR 1846 was introduced into the House of Representatives this past spring. The bill is in the first stage of the legislative process, where it is being considered in the House Energy and Commerce and the House Ways and Means Committees. AMTA will monitor the progress of the bill and will share more information with you as it becomes available.

While AMTA is monitoring the bill, we are considering ways to become more involved in federal legislative efforts such as this one.

If you're looking for past articles on board activities or any other AMTA news, you can log in and download PDF of *Hands On* in the Members Section at www.amtamassage.org/member/handsonindex.html.

AMTA Position Statements Come from You

AMTA's position statements give every member the chance to add to AMTA's public statements on massage and the massage therapy profession. Well-researched and well-written position statements create increased respect for the association and for all AMTA members.

Position statements start with proposals from members submitted to the Position Statements Review Workgroup. Because position statements need to be firmly grounded in supportable research and be in keeping with AMTA policy, it can take some time for them to be developed and approved by the House of Delegates. The AMTA Board of Directors encourages members not to be put off if it takes many months to build a good statement. The time you devote to it will result in stronger AMTA positions.

Any member can develop a proposal. The Position Statements Review Workgroup will even help you as you work out what you want to say. If you have an idea for a proposal, you can submit a draft to the chair of the workgroup, Toni Roberts (GA), or to the staff liaison, Ron Precht, for comments on what you would need to support your proposal. You can do this before you start your research, so you'll have help in knowing what research to gather and in checking to see if it's in keeping with AMTA policy.

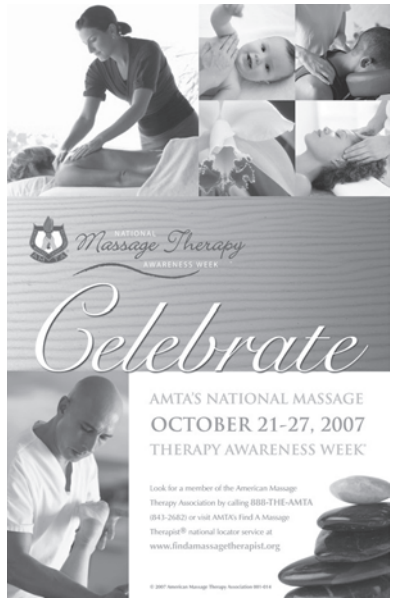
Each year, the deadline to submit your proposal for consideration at the fall House of Delegates meeting is February 1. If you submit your draft idea well in advance, the workgroup can help you shape your proposal and statement.

For more information about how to submit proposed position statements, read the guidelines in the Members Section of the AMTA website at www.amtamassage.org/member/house_delegates.html.

For help in submitting a proposal, contact Workgroup Chair Toni Roberts at trobertslmt@cumberlandmuscletherapy.com, or staff liaison Ron Precht in the National Office at rprecht@amtamassage.org, or toll-free 877-905-2700, ext. 149.

Ten Ways To Celebrate NMTAW

AMTA's National Massage Therapy Awareness Week® (NMTAW), October 21–27, 2007, is almost here. As a massage therapist, you may spend a lot of time working alone. NMTAW is an ideal chance to make connections with your clients, community, fellow AMTA members and your chapter. To help you make the most of your week, we've put together this list of ideas for reaching out and celebrating your profession.



1. **Contact your chapter.** Find out what it's doing this year to celebrate NMTAW, and get involved. It's a great way to network with fellow members while promoting the profession.
2. **Use the NMTAW logo.** It's available on the AMTA website for you to download and use on all your materials. The logo is the new icon of NMTAW and it won't change every year. This means you can invest in items you can reuse next year.
3. **Display the NMTAW poster.** Put it up in your office or at work, or post it in a public area like a coffee shop, grocery store or any high-traffic area. Staple your business card to the bottom of the poster so interested consumers can contact you.
4. **Promote your practice.** Use this week to hold an open house. Invite local businesses, consumers and old and new clients to stop by to learn more about massage and your practice. Ask visitors to enter a drawing to win a free massage. You can save the information on their entries and add them to your mailing list.
5. **Give back to your community.** Identify a group of deserving people in your area who could benefit from your skilled hands. Offer them free chair massage at their location. Some you might consider include police officers, firefighters, EMT workers, nurses, blood donors and senior citizens.
6. **Educate consumers.** Volunteer at your public library, community center or other public venue to hold an informational program on the benefits of massage. Invite one of your clients to speak about their positive experience. Pass out brochures or other literature including your contact information or business cards.
7. **Plan an event with fellow members in your area.** Planning an event can be time-consuming, so why not partner with other member massage therapists and share the responsibilities? Hold your event at a local farmer's market or other public venue.
8. **Start a referral program.** Offer your regular clients a discount for every person they refer to your business. Encourage your clients to share their experiences of the benefits of massage with the people in their lives.
9. **Get in touch with a massage school or program in your area.** Volunteer to speak with their students. Share your experiences, advice and passion for the profession they are preparing to enter. Allow time for them to ask you questions as well.
10. **Get a massage.** Use this week to take time to experience the benefits of massage for yourself!

If you're still not sure how to go about planning your NMTAW activity, there are plenty of resources to help you in the NMTAW section of the AMTA website! The NMTAW FAQs offer quick tips and ideas for events and uses of the NMTAW logo. Just log in at www.amtamassage.org/member/NMTAW.html to access this and other valuable tools.

Members have come up with creative and fun ways to promote massage during NMTAW, and the National Office wants to share your ideas and successful activities with other members, chapters and schools. However you choose to celebrate NMTAW, please complete the member event or activity report form available on AMTA's website at www.amtamassage.org/member/nmtaw4.html and mail it to Karla Karapetian at the National Office, or e-mail it to kkarapetian@amtamassage.org.

fingerprints

House Science

Putting Research on the Table

By Pete Reinwald

Douglas Nelson (IL) is bringing science and discovery to massage therapy. Through his company, NMT Midwest, Inc., Nelson is emphasizing research and scientific thinking—concepts generally limited to scientists and PhDs.

"Part of this is that many years ago, in the age of enlightenment, when science was just getting started, there was a lot of 'house science,' " Nelson says. "Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were doing experiments on their kitchen tables." Nelson says such science "gets people involved, and it gets them thinking about how to do critical thinking."

NMT Midwest (www.nmtmidwest.com) gives seminars throughout the country on Precision Neuromuscular Therapy, or PNMT, which Nelson developed as a way for therapists to treat the precise source of a client's discomfort. For about five years, the company also has been doing its own science-based clinical research designed, as Nelson says, to deepen "understanding of the basic underlying physiological processes and possible interventions."

In February, the company sponsored its first PNMT Research Symposium in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. It brought therapists together to share ideas on research and to consider future studies. Participants considered presentations such as "Musician Injuries: Correlating Injuries with Instruments," "The Relationship of Scapular Position and Neck Pain" and "Handedness and Shoulder Problems: Is There a Connection?"

Nelson says the symposium allowed therapists to discuss the results of their research and, in one case, to improve the focus of their research design.

"I had one group of two or three therapists who presented a study they were in the process of designing," Nelson says. "There were all sorts of variables they never thought of. Discussing it as a group helped them to declare their hypothesis. What are the possible variables? How can we know these things, and how can we measure them?"

Research at NMT Midwest is done by therapists who attend seminars or are undergoing the PNMT certification process. The company implements its research by "changing the model of how we treat clients" and teach therapists, Nelson says.

Instructors seek to imbed scientific principles, including critical thinking, "into everything we do," Nelson says. "If a therapist is working on a muscle, the question is: How do you know that that muscle is the problem? On what basis are you making that assumption? How would you know if that [assumption] wasn't true? And how will you know when it's different or better?"

Nelson says his former assumptions helped inspire him to bring science into practice. "Much of what I knew fell under the category of assumptions," he says. "Assumptions that I previously taught for many years, I later found out were incorrect. It's important to have an open mind and a clear mind."

"Think of the respect that these therapists [will] get from the medical community when that community finds out that we're serious enough to do real clinical research on what we do," he says.

Benjamin Franklin would have been proud.

The Critical Thinking Community defines critical thinking as "that mode of thinking—about any subject, content, or problem—in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them." To learn more, visit www.criticalthinking.org.

Laurel Finch (OH), LMT, LLC, presents her research on restricted opening of the mandible at the PNMT Research Symposium in February 2007.

Improve Your Newsletter

AMTA is looking for volunteers for the *Hands On* Editorial Review Committee. Members on this committee will play an important role in improving *Hands On* content, reviewing articles for relevance and suggesting topics and writers.

For more information and a job description, please contact Melissa Spani, governance and volunteer development assistant, at mspani@amtamassage.org or toll-free 877-905-2700, ext. 189. Or send an e-mail directly to the *Hands On* editor, Jane Seiberling, at handson@amtamassage.org.

AMTA's Online Shopping Mall—Where Members Save!

Let your member discount help stock your practice. Visit AMTA's Shopping Mall at www.amtamassage.org/shoppingmall to take advantage of up to 30 percent off and free shipping on a variety of brand name products. We're constantly negotiating with vendors so we can offer you the best possible prices and help lower your operating expenses.

Your exclusive pricing is another great reason to be an AMTA member. Here are just a few of the current offers:

- **Oakworks** Portal Pro Massage Table Package now $416 ($489 retail), plus free shipping in the continental United States.
- **Oakworks** stationary tables at 15 percent off.
- **Stronglite** 30-inch Classic Deluxe Massage Table Package only $300, plus free shipping in the continental United States.
- New **Earthlite** Spirit table, member price only $399 plus free disposable headrest covers (pack of 100) and free shipping in the continental United States.
- **Stanton Lanier** four-CD music set for $39.99 ($49.99 retail).
- **Bon Vital** Naturale oils, lotions, gels and creams are 25 percent off for a limited time.

Check out our growing product and educational offerings at www.amtamassage.org/shoppingmall. Be sure to log in with your member ID and password to see all the discounts you can get as a member.

Learn to Spot E-mail Scams

Recently, several massage therapists have received e-mails from senders who claim to have found their e-mail address on AMTA's website. Then they give a standard scam approach. You should know that AMTA no longer displays the e-mail addresses of members who provide e-mail contact through *AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist*® national locator service.

The National Office has heard from at least one massage therapist who isn't even an AMTA member, but received an e-mail from someone claiming he learned of the therapist through AMTA. There are many different ways scammers can find your e-mail address, such as Internet chat rooms, web pages, web forms, online directories, AOL user profiles or even just by guessing.

The Scam

The most common scam approach involves an e-mail from someone in another country, who claims to be planning a visit to the United States and wants to schedule a series of massage sessions. After you set a price, this person sends a cashier's check for far more than the cost of the sessions and asks you to return the difference. Unfortunately, the check is a fake.

Even though your bank may tell you the check has cleared, it actually takes your bank several weeks to discover the fraud. By then, you've lost the amount sent as a refund, and the bank requires you to repay the entire amount of the check.

This common scam is directed at people in several professions. The Federal Trade Commission gives practical tips on how to protect yourself from e-mail scams or other forms of computer misuse. You can learn more about it at http://onguardonline.gov. And remember, if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.

AMTA urges you to be careful opening e-mails from people you don't know. If someone claiming to be affiliated with AMTA contacts you and it seems suspicious, please check with the National Office toll-free at 877-905-2700 or by e-mail to info@amtamassage.org. Contacting the National Office lets AMTA know what scams are taking place and helps us alert other members.

History: The AMTA Logo

By Patricia J. Benjamin, PhD

The current AMTA logo—a shield with hands holding a flaming torch—has been a symbol of the association for almost fifty years. The basic design was created in 1958 by Charles W. Brooks, then editor of *Massage Journal*.

The old logo had become obsolete when the name of the association changed at the 1958 convention from the American Association of Masseurs and Masseuses to the American Massage & Therapy Association. A new emblem was called for, and members wanted a logo symbolic of their values as individual massage therapists and as an association.

The shield represents strength and integrity, and the hands uphold the torch of wisdom and understanding. The flame symbolizes a burning desire to be of service to others. The colors of red, white and blue were made official in 1963. Although the look of the logo has been updated periodically, the elements remain true to the original concept.

Source: *Massage Journal*, September 1963.

AM&TA logo, 1958.

Focus on the Profession: Certification

Last issue we introduced Focus on the Profession, *a new series of articles created to provide you with information about each of the four cornerstones of the massage therapy profession: accreditation, certification, licensure and research. We believe it's important for all massage therapists to understand these issues as we work together to advance the profession and establish standards that will lay the groundwork for our future.*

In the July/August 2007 issue we wrote on the first of the cornerstones—accreditation. As with that first article, this article on certification includes responses from a survey we mailed to members in November 2006. Thanks to all of you who participated.

What is Certification?
Certification is a way for professionals in a given field to demonstrate their high standards of achievement and continued competence to consumers. In massage therapy, it indicates that a practitioner has demonstrated sufficient mastery of specific knowledge and skills to offer consumers a consistent quality of care.

There are many courses of instruction in the massage therapy field that offer certifications. These certifications designate the successful completion of a particular course or topic and/or the passing of an exam. An example would be instruction in a specific modality by a recognized expert in the field. Many continuing education courses and massage schools offer certification in a particular technique or modality. This type of certification allows massage therapists to gain more knowledge and skill in a given area. For example, a massage therapist may become certified in prenatal or perinatal massage.

Massage therapists may also become nationally certified, which is different from the type of certification described above.

What is National Certification?
Most professions maintain a standard of achievement known as national certification. This is a voluntary, advanced credential that establishes national standards for what accomplished practitioners in a given field should know and be able to do.

National certification is typically administered by a national board that certifies professionals who successfully complete a defined certification process.

For the massage therapy profession, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (www.ncbtmb.org) is the only nationally recognized certification agency. The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (www.nccaom.org) also certifies certain types of bodywork.

How National Certification Standards Develop
National certification standards are typically developed using a *job task analysis survey*. It usually involves the following steps:

- A random sample is taken from the full population of practitioners in a particular profession. The sample size is selected to effectively represent the profession.
- Using input for educators and practitioners, a survey is developed that lists the knowledge, skills and abilities one must have to practice in the profession and asks the recipients to rate them in importance.
- Professional practitioners take the survey.
- The data is analyzed to create a defined body of knowledge that candidates must master to gain national certification. This body of knowledge is then used to create specifications for the creation of examinations and eligibility requirements.

A national certification usually must be renewed periodically. A common requirement for renewal is evidence of continued learning through continuing education.

The State of National Certification Today
Across the massage therapy profession, certification is clearly valued. More than 86,000 practitioners are nationally certified and, in our November 2006 survey, 94 percent of professional members agreed that consumers have a right to expect that massage therapists have consistent training and skills. In fact, 62 percent agreed that *all* massage therapists should be nationally certified.

National certification examinations are currently used or recognized in statute or rule by 31 of the 38 states that regulate massage therapy, plus the District of Columbia. In the majority of these states, successful completion of a national certification examination is one of the requirements that must be met to practice legally.

Although some states use national certification examinations as part of their requirements to practice legally, national certification is not the same as state licensure. National certification is a *voluntary* process by which a *nongovernmental professional organization* recognizes an individual who has met certain qualifications. State licensure is a *nonvoluntary* process by which a *governmental agency* regulates a profession.

We'll cover the topic of licensure, and the evolving professional landscape around it, in a future issue of *Hands On*.

Member Profile: Brenda Griffith

Brenda Griffith (VA), CMT, is an AMTA vice president, and has seen public perceptions of massage therapy change since she began her career almost 20 years ago. She credits national certification as one of the factors that has led to this change. "National certification allows massage therapists to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a way that is recognized both within the profession and by consumers," she says.

Griffith has a private massage practice in Richmond and specializes in massage for stress relief and for those with arthritis, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis and other neuromuscular diseases and also for breast cancer survivors. "Being nationally certified doesn't end with the successful completion of the exam," Griffith states. "It is a commitment to continue to gain more experience through continuing education. It's an important step in elevating the profession."

Griffith has been actively involved in AMTA at both the state and national level for more than 19 years.

AMTA Hosts Chapter Volunteers at CVOP 2007

AMTA hosted the fifth annual Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program (CVOP) in Evanston, Illinois, July 12–15. Ninety-four chapter officers, representing 50 chapters, took part in the training. "Journey to Leadership" was the theme for CVOP 2007, and what a journey it was!

Chapter Relations Committee Chair Chris Voltarel (CA) set off the journey on Thursday, encouraging CVOP attendees to consider how they can best serve AMTA members while also embracing the challenges and opportunities that come with volunteering. President-elect M.K. Brennan (NC) was also on hand to welcome attendees on behalf of the national board.

Both Voltarel and Brennan praised chapters for their hard work in collaboration with the national workgroup that developed changes in chapter financial reporting that will take effect in FY08/09. To help chapters prepare, the reporting changes and the need for strong financial controls were front and center during education sessions.

On Friday and Saturday Leadership Outfitters, who provide leadership seminars for businesses and associations, led the journey through education sessions. The topics ranged from chapter financial reporting to acting as an ambassador for AMTA to rejuvenating the volunteer spirit. Attendee Maureen Hoock (MO) found the lively session atmosphere exhilarating, saying, "What an atmosphere to be in—an ocean of leaders and ambassadors for AMTA! I love CVOP because it's the opportunity to be immersed in a learning environment that is intense, but is made fun."

Attendees also had the opportunity to explore AMTA's programs and services with National Office staff at Friday afternoon's program fair. At the same time, one-on-one consultations were available with AMTA Government Relations staff, with AMTA's legal counsel and, for the first time, with AMTA's Professional Development staff for assistance with meeting planning. The Massage Therapy Foundation also offered a presentation on its programs, opportunities for collaboration with chapters and fundraising efforts.

Attendees formed lasting connections throughout the weekend to help them on their journey to leadership. "CVOP continues to be one of my favorite AMTA events," says Voltarel. "We had almost 100 chapter volunteers in attendance, sharing experiences and learning from one another. I get a charge from it every year, and it renews my belief that training and networking contribute to strong, successful chapter leaders."

Want to volunteer for your chapter? Visit the AMTA volunteer database at www.amtamassage.org/AMTA-VolunteerCenter or contact Melissa Spani, governance and volunteer development assistant, toll-free at 877-905-2700, ext. 189, or by e-mail to mspani@amtamassage.org.

Top: Chapter volunteers in an education session test their knowledge with a game of "Financial Jeopardy."

Center: An AMTA staffer discusses education issues with a member.

Bottom: A CVOP attendee watches a demonstration of new features on the AMTA website.

Member Growth Strategy

A new event during CVOP this year was special training for chapter volunteers who want to recruit student members. Eight volunteers attended a day-long session to enhance their abilities to contact schools, make a lasting positive impression and build relationships.

Each attendee participated in activities to assess his or her one-on-one communication skills, listening skills, attention to detail and ability to develop presentations using information in the training manual, and gave two practice presentations.

The session was a great success. "I am excited and feel supported," says Joyce McKinley (IA). "It's an important task and I look forward to developing the process and myself as we go."

AMTA will use responses from attendees to create a more comprehensive student recruitment guide. When complete, the new guide will be available to all chapters on the AMTA website.

Q & A with the NCBTMB

As a service to our members, AMTA provides timely information on other organizations that are active in the massage therapy profession. In the March/April 2007 issue of Hands On*, we published a Q & A with Debra Persinger, executive director of the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB). In this issue, we present answers to some commonly asked questions from our recent interview with Christopher Laxton, CEO of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB).*

Q: What is the mission of NCBTMB?

A: NCBTMB's mission is to foster high standards of ethical and professional practice in the delivery of services through a recognized, credible certification program that assures the competency and professionalism of practitioners of therapeutic massage and bodywork. We advance and elaborate our mission through our strategic plan.

Q: Why and when was it created and how is it governed? We ask this because we sometimes hear that AMTA operates NCBTMB.

A: During the mid-1980s, members of the massage and bodywork profession recognized a growing need to standardize requirements for practitioners and ensure high levels of knowledge, competency, professionalism and ethics.

Consequently, national certification was initiated as a project by AMTA in August 1988, with the first exam being administered in 1992. Today, NCBTMB is governed by a nine-member board of directors, seven certified massage therapists and two public members.

Since 1994, NCBTMB has been a separately incorporated, separately managed organization without obligations to or influence from any other entity, including AMTA. In order to maintain our national accreditation through the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), we are required to demonstrate both our governance and operational independence on an ongoing basis.

Q: What is NCBTMB doing to strengthen certification within the profession?

A: While NCBTMB continues to uphold the highest standards of exam development analysis and administration, we're also working to enhance communication of the value of certification to practitioners, state boards and other stakeholders through newsletters, a redesigned website and other online methods of communication.

NCBTMB is becoming more focused on communicating on a grassroots level, where the board and staff can meet and get feedback from certificants in the field. It's through efforts like these that we're making strides toward a broad-based strengthening of certification within the profession.

Finally, NCBTMB is working to maximize its overall performance by substantially improving its governance and organizational infrastructure. The result will be a more effective, more credible credentialing body, which will in turn improve the credibility of the certification itself.

Q: Many massage therapists are concerned with portability and would like to be able to practice from state to state. Do you see NCBTMB playing a role in making this possible? And if so, how?

A: It's important that all massage and bodywork professionals begin to recognize the high cost of fragmentation and confusing complexity in this growing field. It's up to all of us in this profession to maintain a single, relevant set of criteria for evaluating massage therapists and bodyworkers, or we will face the proliferation of less rigorous or credible standards. Because of this, we must all work to increase public and regulatory awareness of the national standards, and to advocate aggressively for portability based on state adoption of a single national credential.

For a long time now, NCBTMB has worked with regulators and legislators so that massage therapists and bodyworkers could practice in any state, as other credentialed health care practitioners are able to do.

NCBTMB feels strongly that by strengthening our partnership with, and providing support to, the state regulatory bodies we can create a win-win, where we can work together on our shared mission of public protection, and simplify and clarify the requirements for quality, standard professional practice in therapeutic massage and bodywork.

Q: There have been some concerns over past actions of your board. How has NCBTMB addressed these concerns?

A: Actions of the immediate past chair in November 2006 resulted in the dismissal of two board members and the attempted removal of another board member, and raised questions concerning NCBTMB leadership. An independent governance panel was engaged in February 2007 by the new Chair Donna Feeley and board to investigate and report their findings back to the leadership. The panel had no prior affiliation with NCBTMB and consisted of individuals renowned for their background in governance and law.

As part of our commitment to transparency, we're sharing the complete findings of the independent review with all our stakeholders. The entire report can be found by visiting www.ncbtmb.com and clicking on "Independent Governance Panel Report." We are confident that implementing the panel's suggestions will improve the integrity and effectiveness of the board's proceedings and ultimately the quality of the organization's performance. Under Chair Feeley's leadership, we are instituting a leadership governance training for all volunteers to enhance the quality and consistency of our leadership.

Q: Some AMTA members have expressed concerns about NCBTMB customer service. What specific issues are you addressing?

A: NCBTMB has had its share of customer service challenges, and current leadership accepts responsibility to correct these problems in order to move forward in a better way. While we're hard at work building a true customer service organization, we've also put in place some several short-term improvements, including:

- Creating a web-based program so certification candidates can check the status of their applications.
- Implementing direct phone lines for all customer-contact staff so candidates can call their certification representative directly rather than going through the main switchboard.
- Implementing system-generated e-mail messages to applicants so they'll know we've received their applications, if there are missing application items, when they're eligible to test and so forth.

The main improvement, however, will come in the near future when we integrate our external call center into our national office with a standardized, efficient service process for our customers, including telephone, e-mail, website, data storage and recordkeeping systems. We'll train our customer service representatives and measure our performance based on how well our customers are satisfied with our service.

We want to invite AMTA members to be part of our national conversation—please let us know how we might serve you better by contacting us by e-mail to feedback@ncbtmb.com, by telephone at 630-627-8000 or toll-free 800-296-0664.

We hope to meet many of you at the AMTA National Convention in Cincinnati!

AMTA Delivers CE Contact Hours

If you're looking for continuing education (CE) that's convenient to your schedule, AMTA has just what you need—online courses that provide from 2 to 24 CE contact hours. You can take these courses at home, at your computer and at any time you want. Prices are discounted for members to help you stay within your budget.

AMTA's Online Training site, www.amtaonlinetraining.org, now offers more than 20 NCBTMB-approved business, ethics and modality courses. AMTA adds one new course per quarter—read it first in **mtj**, then go online to register, enroll and take the final exam.

All four ethics courses meet the requirements stated in NCB's Standard V: Roles & Boundaries. Courses are only $12 per contact hour for members. To register, go to the training site and click on "Enroll Now." You can take your course right away or come back later. When you successfully complete a course's final exam, you can view, print out or save a customized certificate—all online.

AMTA also partners with nationally known trainers to offer members up to 20 percent off the retail cost of their most popular courses. Just visit AMTA's online Shopping Mall at www.amtamassage.org/shoppingmall to place your order for valuable home-study courses. Our current partners are:

- **Erik Dalton**—Advanced Myoskeletal Techniques, 20 contact hours;
- **Peggy Lamb**—Stretch Your Clients, 16 contact hours;
- **Carole Osborne Sheets**—Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy, 7 contact hours;
- **Vivian Madison Mahoney**—Manipulate Your Future (Insurance Billing, Practice Building, Ethics), 24 contact hours;
- **David Kent**—Three home-study packages, 24 contact hours each, plus his Trigger Point and Muscle and Posture charts.

Earning contact hours may be easier than you think. Why not try a course today? Join 3,000 of your colleagues who successfully go online to take an AMTA course or purchase one from AMTA's Shopping Mall publishing partners.

MASSAGE THERAPY FOUNDATION

Foundation News

REGISTER NOW FOR THE FOUNDATION'S POST-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

Advanced Muscle Energy Techniques for Massage Therapists

12 contact hours

Presented by Leon Chaitow, DO, ND. Muscle Energy Techniques (MET) involves the use of mild isometric or isotonic contractions to facilitate subsequent mobilizations or stretching procedures. These methods are ideal for use in conjunction with massage and other soft tissue manipulation procedures. This workshop will focus on practical clinical applications backed by research. All proceeds will benefit the Massage Therapy Foundation.

For dates, times, fees and to register please visit the convention registration page on AMTA's website at www.amtamassage.org/education/NationalConvention2007.html.

Research News

2007 STUDENT CASE REPORT WINNERS

Five exceptional students are this year's winners of the annual Student Case Report Contest.

This year's Gold Award goes to Anne Walton from the Kiné-Concept Institute in Ontario, Canada, for her report, "Investigating the Effectiveness of Myofascial Release Techniques in the Treatment of Primary Raynaud's Syndrome." As the first place winner, Walton will receive $2,500, an invitation to present her report in a foundation-sponsored session at the AMTA 2007 National Convention in Cincinnati, $1,000 each for herself and her faculty supervisor to attend the convention, publication of her report in *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies (JBMT)* and WinCity SOAP Notes software.

The Silver Award goes to Jada Bell from Carteret Community College in Jacksonville, North Carolina, for her report, "Massage Therapy's Effects on Low Back Pain with Sciatica Symptoms." Bell will receive $2,000, an invitation to present her case report as a poster session during the AMTA National Convention, publication of her case report in *JBMT* and WinCity SOAP Notes software.

The Bronze Award goes to Robin Anderson from Community College of Baltimore County for her report, "Positive Systemic Effects Using Therapeutic Massage as a Conjunctive Treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis." Anderson receives $1,500, an invitation to present her case report as a poster session during the AMTA National Convention and WinCity SOAP Notes software.

Two Honorable Mentions go to Alana Mountain from Fleming College, Ontario, Canada, for "Massage Therapy Reduces Frequency and Intensity of Symptoms from Lumbar Disk Herniations," and to Eric Mathis from Atlantic College of Therapeutic Massage in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, for "The Effects of Massage Therapy in Pain Management for Patients Undergoing Chemotherapy for Cancer."

The Student Case Report Contest supports the foundation's belief that education about research will build a deeper appreciation of massage therapy. It promotes research literacy in massage therapy schools by integrating research into schools' existing programs. With the support and cooperation of schools, students learn to write a research case report and begin to incorporate research into their practice habits.

education

Calendar

2007

September 24–25
AMTA Board of Directors Meeting
Cincinnati, Ohio
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 157
gmitchell@amtamassage.org

September 26–29
AMTA National Convention
Cincinnati, Ohio
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 143
hstearns@amtamassage.org

October 4–5
First International Fascia Research Congress
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts
Contact: www.fascia2007.com

October 21–27
National Massage Therapy Awareness Week®
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 133
kkarapetian@amtamassage.org

2008

January 24–26
AMTA Council of Schools Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting
Savannah, Georgia
Contact: 877-905-2700, ext. 143
hstearns@amtamassage.org

Upcoming Deadlines
October 15, 2007 – January/February 2008
December 7, 2007 – March/April 2008

Hands On welcomes contributions from AMTA members. All submissions must include contact information, and may be edited for space and clarity. *Hands On* does not accept advertisements. Address all correspondence to:

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CREATING CONNECTIONS IN CINCINNATI
with your career, your community, your profession

AMTA 2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION
SEPTEMBER 26-29 | CINCINNATI, OHIO

Earn CE Contact Hours at National Convention

Cincinnati, September 26–29, 2007

The AMTA 2007 National Convention is just around the corner, and there's still time for you to make plans to attend. Cincinnati is easy to get to by car, or if you don't want to drive, megabus or Greyhound can get you there for less than $50 roundtrip (www.megabus.com; www.greyhound.com).

Can't attend the entire convention? Register for single-session classes. Education sessions range from three-hour courses to a full-day, eight-hour course, and even two 16-hour courses that run over two days.

The 16-hour courses are "CORE Institute's Sports & Performance Bodywork: A Four System Approach," presented by George Kousaleos on Tuesday, September 25, and Wednesday, September 26, and L. Frank Jarrell's "Spinal Reflex Analysis: Level 1" on Friday, September 28, and Saturday, September 29.

Other continuing education highlights at this year's convention include:

- Identify and Prevent Injuries Before They Occur—Fiona Rattray
- Addressing the Needs of an Aging Population—Meir Schneider
- The Making of a Spa Professional: Career Coaching from the Experts—Lori Hutchinson, Jenean LaRoche, Randy Schreck, Diane Trieste
- The Mystery of Pain—Doug Nelson
- Highlights of Thai Massage—Kay Rynerson
- Ethics for Educators—Dianne Polseno
- Mouth Marketing: How to Promote Yourself Verbally—Jenn Sommermann

Onsite registration opens on Wednesday, September 26, at noon in the Duke Energy Center, Cincinnati.

We hope to see you there! For more information, go to www.amtamassage.org or call the National Office toll-free at 877-905-2700, ext. 143.

Guide Your Professional Association by Voting

It's time to start thinking about casting your vote. Elections are coming up for the national board. Because AMTA is member-driven, we rely on the support and participation of members in all aspects of the association.

All AMTA Professional members in good standing are eligible to participate in elections. Here are the key dates for the election cycle:

November 1: Election packets are mailed to eligible voters.
December 1: Completed ballots are due.
January 1: Results will be announced on the AMTA website by the first business day of the new year.
March 1: New officers assume office. New call for candidates is issued.

Note: Scheduled dates that fall on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday are moved to the next business day.

Hands On
The Newsletter of the American Massage Therapy Association
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